



Iowa Outdoors

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AUTUMN FISHING TRIPS PROVIDE SCENIC DISTRACTION, REWARDS ANGLERS

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

So many choices. So little time.

A common lament this time of the year. Spend an extra morning in a tree stand? Work with the new puppy to point the pheasants I'm going to miss? Even cutting firewood turns outdoor recreation when the woods are crisp, dry and full of fall color. Savvy anglers know, though, that there is still a lot of action in Iowa's lakes and streams. That is where *they* head in the fall outdoors.

"There's big interest right now in fall fishing; especially for crappies," said Scott Gritters, Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologist, based in Guttenberg. "Fish are going on a feeding frenzy right now. When the water gets colder, crappies move into the backwaters, moving into the woody habitat; fallen trees, places like that."

Fish species are looking for adequate depth for when the river freezes from the top down, but areas where they don't have to expend critical winter energy fighting much of a current. Food sources are always important, too. However, their feeding needs slow to a trickle, as their cold-blooded metabolisms kick in.

Inland, lake crappies will be looking for brush, too. Fluctuations in the water temperatures, though, are the key to cool weather fishing. "A couple degrees make a big difference in where fish will be found," noted Paul Sleeper, DNR fisheries biologist. "Here at Lake Macbride, for instance, a warm wind blowing water into the causeway for

a couple days really makes a difference. Baitfish look for that slightly warmer water. The game fish follow.”

On the other hand, as a cold snap hits, the shoreline and shallows will cool faster. That pushes fish into deeper water. A boat-mounted depth finder with a temperature feature is valuable for marking underwater hangouts.

During the heat of summer, many deeper lakes ‘stratify.’ Oxygen goes out of the colder water at the bottom of the lake, crowding fish closer to the top. As temperatures on the surface match the bottom, though, there is a thermocline turnover. “Fish have access to the whole lake, then,” points out Sleeper. “They might scatter, as the water temp hits the mid to upper 50s.” He suggests fishing different depths to locate those suspended fish.

Those windows of opportunity close quickly, though. “We got a couple perch and a few bluegills, but not very many big ones,” offered Don Koppenhaven of Mount Vernon, as he and his wife pulled in one small bluegill after another from the west shore of Bussey Lake, above Guttenberg. “There’s about a ten day to two week window when the bluegills come in around this dock; nice ones and they’re hungry,” laughed Koppenhaven. “It’s usually middle September. We missed it this time.” He’s not giving up, though. The small ones just get tossed back in, while he tries for the bigger ones.

Besides, in a few weeks....there will be ice fishing.

Newsnotes:

Duck, Duck, Goose: Waterfowl hunters need to look closely at their zone maps this weekend. Iowa’s late duck and goose seasons each re-open in their *north* zones, October 15. However, they no longer share a common dividing line.

The north *duck* zone sits north of Interstate 80 across most of Iowa (with a jog north in the far west). The Interstate used to split the north/south goose zones, too. However, the *goose* zones are now delineated by Highway 20. That means popular spots such as Hawkeye, Otter Creek, and Green Island Wildlife Areas as well as others between I-80 and Highway 20 are now in the *south* goose zone, which reopens October 22.

A complete look at the zone maps, hunting dates and other regulations is available in Iowa’s Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations booklet, available at license outlets or on line at www.iowadnr.com (click on ‘hunting information’, then ‘migratory bird regulations’)

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Generates \$5 million in developments

20 CITIES GRANTED \$1.7 MILLION FOR OUTDOORS PROJECTS

DES MOINES – The state's Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program has granted \$1.7 million for 20 different city outdoor recreation projects.

While REAP grants to cities do not require any matching money, the projects are popular enough to attract an additional \$3.1 million from local and other sources, generating nearly \$5 million for trail and park amenities in the coming year.

The projects must have outdoor recreation benefits related to natural resources. Such projects as ball fields and other organized athletic activities, swimming pools and the like are prohibited. City grants make up 15 per cent of the total annual REAP program, currently at \$11.6 million, a little more than half of its authorized \$20 million. More than half of the 36 other cities who applied but were not funded, could have received money if REAP was funded at \$20 million.

State gaming revenues pay for most of REAP, with additional funding from natural resource license plates which has been bolstered by the recent addition of two new designs featuring an eagle and a pheasant.

To level the competition for the grants, cities are divided into three categories by population.

Grants approved for cities of populations less than 2,000:

Strawberry Point, Strawberry Backbone Trail Phase 2: \$75,000 from REAP for a \$207,200 project to provide a filter strip of native vegetation protecting the Maquoketa River from storm water runoff. Included are a nature trail and a wide range of educational and recreational opportunities. One-quarter acre is to be acquired with the remainder of the project on existing city property.

Battle Creek, Battle Creek Nature and Recreation Area: \$21,048 from REAP for a \$108,248 project to develop a 3,000-foot trail, including an arboretum, native vegetation displays, fishing pond and picnic areas.

Readlyn, Rolling Prairie Trail Development and Park Improvements, phase 1: \$30,413 from REAP for a \$52,227 project to develop 2,023 feet of trail.

Dallas Center, Union Pacific Railroad Trail System: \$75,000 from REAP to buy 26 acres of abandoned railroad line which will eventually be part of a 28.1-mile trail from Dawson to Waukee, and eventually hundreds of miles in central Iowa.

Arnolds Park, Abbie Gardner Cabin Park Project: \$75,000 from REAP for a \$108,900 project to buy two parcels of residential property on the south side of the cabin and park. Two small houses will be removed and a shelter house/restroom, parking area added.

Coon Rapids, Riverside Park Trail Extension, phase 6: \$75,000 from REAP for a \$78,925 project to develop a 4,100-foot trail extension connecting the proposed American Discovery Trail and the Whiterock Conservancy area.

Alden, Iowa River Access and Portage: \$16,200 from REAP for a \$23,700 project to develop about two acres into a canoe and kayak access on the Iowa River, including parking and picnic areas, above and below a low-head dam which will greatly enhance safety of river use.

Grants approved for cities of populations between 2,000 and 25,000:

Centerville/Appanoose County Conservation Board, Lelah Bradley Park Addition: \$40,000 from REAP for a \$140,000 project to protect and improve the recreation, education, habitat and water supply values of the city reservoirs at this park. Included is the purchase and development of 20 acres for nature trail extensions.

Anamosa, Hale Bridge: \$98,306 from REAP for a \$465,000 project to relocate and restore the Hale Bridge as an access to Wapsipinicon State Park. The bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Webster City, Boone River Trail, final phase: \$100,000 from REAP for a \$1.5 million project to develop a 2.5-mile trail and 210-foot bridge across the Boone River and into Briggs Woods Park. The completed six-mile trail connects the Webster City trail with the Hamilton County trail, along with several city parks, one private park and a golf course.

Eldora, Eldora Rail-Trail: \$75,000 from REAP for a \$91,400 project to buy 16.25 acres, 1.12 miles, of an abandoned Union Pacific Railroad line and develop a trail linking to the Hardin County-Pine Lake State Park trail system.

Huxley, Huxley Trail Extension: \$44,000 from REAP for a \$63,000 project to develop about 2,100 feet of trail, completing the trail from Slater to Cambridge. A one-acre park development and 30-foot gazebo are included.

Coralville, Clear Creek Greenway Acquisition: \$125,000 from REAP to purchase 23 acres in the Clear Creek Greenway.

Humboldt, Cottonwood Trail Enhancement: \$66,400 from REAP for a \$112,400 project to expand and widen 1,170-foot of this existing trail.

Grants approved for cities of populations more than 25,000:

Mason City, Winnebago River Trail Bridge: \$39,552 from REAP for a \$615,000 project to construct a bridge across the Winnebago River connecting the regional trails system. This is a 220-foot by 10-foot, three-span steel bridge.

Waterloo, Riverview Recreation Area Enhancements: \$200,000 from REAP for a \$305,500 project to develop a 2,600-foot trail, picnic shelters and signage.

Dubuque, Iowa 32 Bike-Hike Trail: \$200,000 from REAP for a \$237,360 project for phase one of a two-mile trail to connect regional trails, riverfront attractions and the Mines of Spain State Recreation Area.

Sioux City, Lewis and Clark National Historic Marina Riverfront Loop: \$100,000 from REAP to construct a 1,260-foot trail loop along the banks of the Missouri River.

Davenport, Goose Creek Recreation Path: \$72,115 from REAP for a \$170,000 project to construct a paved trail along the east side of the Goose Creek Greenway. This is the first one-half mile of a five-phased, six-plus mile, 10-foot trail.

Marion, Krumholtz Woods: \$150,000 from REAP for a \$187,500 project to buy 37.5 acres of woodland along the Indian Creek greenbelt, with additional 7.5 acres being donated by the owners, for a nature trail connection to Cedar Rapids, and includes conservation, education and habitat protection activities.

For more information, contact Ross Harrison, DNR, at 515-281-5973, or ross.harrison@dnr.state.ia.us.

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Generates \$2.4 million in total

5 COUNTY CONSERVATION PROJECTS GRANTED \$895,000

DES MOINES – The state’s Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program has granted \$895,000 to five county conservation boards for major outdoor recreation and conservation projects.

In addition to the help from REAP, the projects bring more than \$1.5 million in local and other funding. County conservation board grants amount to eight percent of the REAP annual budget of \$11.6 million, or a little more than one-half of REAP’s authorized \$20 million. Twenty counties had applied for grants but available funding was far short of the \$3 million being sought.

State gaming revenues pay for most of REAP, with additional funding from natural resource license plates which has been bolstered by the recent addition of two new designs featuring an eagle and a pheasant.

The following county conservation board projects were approved:

Woodbury CCB, Little Sioux Park- Correctionville Trail: \$232,060 from REAP for an \$815,412 project to develop a 1.75-mile trail with a 650-foot bridge across the Little Sioux River to connect Little Sioux County Park and Correctionville.

Marshall CCB, Marietta Sand Prairie Addition: \$200,000 from REAP for a \$456,000 project to buy and restore the prairie on a 212-acre sand prairie, fen and cropland area next to Marietta Sand Prairie State Preserve, making it one of the most significant sand prairie complexes in the state. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is aiding in the project.

Hardin CCB, Headquarters Segment Addition: \$130,000 from REAP to buy 80 acres of a woodland buffer in the Iowa River Greenbelt, linked to more than 800 acres of protected land along the river.

Bremer CCB, Wapsi River Greenbelt: \$42,900 from REAP to buy 39.5 acres of land along with Wapsipinicon River within the greenbelt area.

Dubuque CCB, Whitewater Canyon Acquisition: \$290,000 from REAP for a \$1 million project to buy 419 acres of Whitewater Canyon (between Dubuque and Cascade). The area has outstanding geologic features, excellent habitat for rare wildlife, and a variety of public recreation opportunities.

For more information, contact Ross Harrison, DNR, at 515-281-5973, or ross.harrison@dnr.state.ia.us.

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2005 CENTRAL REGION WOODLAND STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE

The eighth annual Central Region Woodland Stewardship Conference will be held Saturday, November 19, at the beautiful National Arbor Day Foundation's Lied Conference Center, in Nebraska City, Neb.

The conference is sponsored by State and Extension Forestry in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska, and is designed to provide landowners in the 4-state area with the knowledge and skills to manage their woodland and related resources using good stewardship principles.

The conference agenda includes 20 presentations organized under four concurrent session themes: Wildlife and Prairies, Working Trees / Agroforestry, Woodland Management, and Tree Health.

Conference registration is \$40 per person before November 16. Late registration is \$50 per person. The registration fee includes a great buffet luncheon, refreshments, and handout materials. Service foresters from all four states will also be available for individual consultations. Conference enrollment is limited to 200, so pre-registration is encouraged.

The registration table will be open at 8 a.m., November 19. The main program will start at 9 a.m. and adjourn at 3:50 p.m.

Because of their popularity at past conferences, four pre-conference optional outdoor sessions are scheduled for 4 p.m., Friday, November 5.

1. Tree Identification (Free)
2. Hazelnuts (Free)
3. Measuring Timber (Free)
4. Arbor Day Farm Tree Adventure (\$6)

For more information contact any UNL Extension office, Nebraska Forest Service office, <http://www.nfs.unl.edu> or Nebraska's Conference Coordinator: Dennis Adams, phone (402)472-5822, e-mail: dadams2@unl.edu. Conference information is also available under the Coming Events section on the website: www.nfs.unl.edu.

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